

Original Paper

The Current Situation and Improvement Research on the Dissemination of Chinese Culture in College English Education in China

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Abstract

In today's increasingly globalized world, language education is no longer limited to the imparting of language knowledge; rather, it is more crucial for understanding and disseminating culture through language learning. English, as an internationally common language, holds a significant position in higher education in China. With China's growing status in the process of globalization, the dissemination of Chinese culture becomes particularly important. As an important platform for cultivating international talents, higher education in English bears the significant responsibility of disseminating Chinese culture. However, there are some issues in the current dissemination of Chinese culture in English education in Chinese universities, such as limited cultural content selection, monotonous teaching methods, inadequate teaching staff, and imperfect evaluation systems. These issues affect the effective dissemination of Chinese culture in English education. Therefore, discussing the current situation and improvement measures of the dissemination of Chinese culture in English education in Chinese universities is of great significance for enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture, promoting cultural diversity, and facilitating mutual learning between civilizations. This article will start with an analysis of the current situation, discuss the existing problems, and propose corresponding improvement suggestions, aiming to provide reference for optimizing the dissemination of Chinese culture in College English Education in China.

Keywords

Higher education in English, Chinese culture, Dissemination, Improvement

1. Introduction

With the accelerated process of globalization, English education holds a significant position in Chinese universities. However, there are some issues in the current dissemination of Chinese culture in English education in higher institutions, mainly manifested in limited cultural content selection, monotonous teaching methods, inadequate teaching staff, and imperfect evaluation systems. These problems lead to insufficient understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture among students, making it difficult to effectively showcase the charm of Chinese culture in international exchanges. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the dissemination of Chinese culture in English education in universities, including enriching cultural teaching content, innovating teaching methods, strengthening teacher training, and improving evaluation systems, in order to enhance the effectiveness of disseminating Chinese culture in English teaching and to enhance students' cultural confidence and international competitiveness.

2. Current Situation of the Dissemination of Chinese Culture in College English Education in China

2.1 Limited Selection of Cultural Content

In Chinese universities' English education, the dissemination of cultural content is often restricted, primarily in the selection of cultural elements. English teaching mainly focuses on the imparting of language knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with insufficient emphasis on integrating cultural content. Even when cultural content is involved in teaching, it often remains superficial, such as traditional Chinese festivals, dietary habits, tourist attractions, etc. Although these contents can showcase certain characteristics of Chinese culture to some extent, they lack the dissemination of deep cultural elements and values. For example, the rich cultural heritage of China's literature, history, philosophy, and art is often neglected. This limitation results in students' understanding of Chinese culture remaining superficial, unable to deeply comprehend the connotation and essence of Chinese culture, and thus, it is difficult to accurately convey the true face of Chinese culture in international exchanges.

2.2 Monotonous Teaching Methods

Currently, the dissemination of Chinese culture in higher education English teaching mainly adopts traditional lecturing methods, where teachers explain cultural knowledge in the classroom, and students passively receive it. This teaching method lacks interaction and experience, resulting in students' insufficient understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture. The lack of practical activities and experiential opportunities makes students lack interest and initiative in learning about Chinese culture, making it difficult to effectively absorb and understand cultural content. Moreover, the monotonous teaching methods also restrict the cultivation of students' open-mindedness and innovative thinking, which is not conducive to their in-depth understanding and recognition of Chinese culture.

2.3 Inadequate Teaching Staff

The dissemination of Chinese culture requires teachers with certain cultural literacy and teaching capabilities. However, some universities currently lack such teaching staff in English education. On the one hand, some English teachers may not have a deep understanding of Chinese culture, making it difficult to accurately and comprehensively impart Chinese culture. On the other hand, teachers may lack innovation in teaching methods and means, unable to effectively stimulate students' interest in Chinese culture. These factors collectively affect the effective dissemination of Chinese culture in English teaching and limit students' understanding and recognition of Chinese culture.

2.4 Imperfect Evaluation Systems

The imperfect evaluation system in Chinese universities' English education is an important issue facing the dissemination of Chinese culture. Currently, the evaluation system in English teaching mainly focuses on language skills, emphasizing students' performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with relatively little emphasis on evaluating cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication abilities. This emphasis on language skills overlooks the importance of cultural education, leading students to possibly neglect learning and understanding Chinese culture during the learning process.

Firstly, the imperfect evaluation system leads to insufficient attention to the learning of Chinese culture by students. As the evaluation mainly depends on language skills, students may believe that mastering language knowledge and skills is sufficient to obtain good grades, lacking sufficient motivation and interest in learning cultural content. In this situation, the dissemination of Chinese culture in English teaching is difficult to advance effectively, and students' understanding and recognition of Chinese culture will also be limited.

Secondly, the imperfect evaluation system affects the teaching focus of teachers. Teachers may focus more on the imparting of language knowledge to meet the requirements of the evaluation system, while neglecting the teaching of Chinese cultural content. This situation not only limits the dissemination of Chinese culture in English teaching but also affects students' comprehensive understanding and recognition of Chinese culture.

Furthermore, the lack of evaluation of cultural understanding and cross-cultural communication abilities is also detrimental to the comprehensive development of students' abilities. In the context of globalization, cross-cultural communication skills are becoming increasingly important for personal development and international exchanges. If the evaluation system cannot reasonably assess these abilities, it is difficult to motivate students to actively learn and improve in this aspect.

3. Strategies for Improving the Dissemination of Chinese Culture in Chinese University English Education

3.1 Enrichment of Cultural Content

To effectively disseminate Chinese culture, Chinese university English education should incorporate deeper elements of Chinese culture into teaching, such as Chinese history, philosophy, and art. These contents not only enrich students' cultural knowledge but also help them understand the essence of Chinese culture. For example, by explaining ancient Chinese literary works, introducing Chinese philosophical thoughts, and showcasing traditional Chinese art, students can gain a deeper understanding of the diversity and richness of Chinese culture while learning the language.

3.2 Innovative Teaching Methods

To better disseminate Chinese culture, Chinese university English education should adopt innovative teaching methods to enhance students' participation and experiential learning. Here are two specific examples:

-Example 1: Situational Simulation Method

Situational simulation is an effective teaching method that allows students to immerse themselves in experiencing Chinese culture. For instance, teachers can design scenarios simulating cultural exchanges between China and the West, such as Chinese tea art performances or celebrations of traditional Chinese festivals. By assigning students different roles, such as tea artists, festival organizers, or foreign guests, and engaging in role-playing and dialogue, students can gain insights into Chinese cultural etiquette, traditions, and values. This type of situational simulation not only increases student engagement but also enhances their ability to apply English and cultural knowledge in practical contexts.

-Example 2: Cultural Experience Activities

Cultural experience activities represent another innovative teaching method, enabling students to actively participate in Chinese cultural activities and enhance their appreciation and understanding of the culture. For example, schools can organize calligraphy workshops, inviting professional calligraphers to teach students basic techniques and explain the cultural significance behind calligraphy. Students can experience the charm of Chinese calligraphy firsthand by writing Chinese characters. Additionally, schools can arrange cultural experience activities during the Spring Festival, allowing students to participate in traditional customs such as making dumplings, hanging lanterns, and writing couplets. Through these firsthand experiences, students can deeply appreciate the cultural connotations of Chinese festivals.

Through these innovative teaching methods, students not only acquire knowledge of Chinese culture but also deepen their understanding and identification with the culture through practical experience, thus better disseminating Chinese culture.

3.3 Strengthening Teacher Training

Teachers are crucial carriers of Chinese culture dissemination. In Chinese university English education, enhancing teacher training is key to improving the effectiveness of Chinese culture dissemination. Firstly, attention should be paid to improving teachers' cultural literacy and professional capabilities. This can be achieved by regularly organizing special lectures, workshops, and seminars, enabling teachers to gain in-depth understanding of the essence and characteristics of Chinese culture and master effective methods for integrating cultural knowledge into English teaching. Secondly, teachers should be encouraged to participate in research and projects related to Chinese culture, exploring more innovative teaching methods through practical experiments to enhance the attractiveness and dissemination power of teaching. Additionally, establishing platforms for teacher exchange facilitates the sharing of experiences and mutual learning among teachers, fostering a favorable teaching atmosphere. These measures effectively enhance teachers' teaching level and ability to disseminate Chinese culture, providing students with a richer and more in-depth cultural learning experience.

3.4 Improving the Evaluation System

To effectively disseminate Chinese culture, Chinese university English education needs to establish an evaluation system focusing on cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills. This evaluation system should not only assess students' language skills but also emphasize their understanding of Chinese culture and ability to communicate across cultures. Firstly, the evaluation system should include assessments of students' mastery of cultural knowledge, such as Chinese history, literature, and philosophy, through written exams, oral presentations, or project displays. Secondly, the evaluation system should emphasize students' intercultural communication skills, including their ability to communicate effectively, resolve cultural conflicts, and demonstrate cultural sensitivity in different cultural contexts. This can be evaluated through simulated communication activities, group discussions, or actual communication projects. Finally, the evaluation system should encourage students to actively participate in Chinese cultural dissemination activities, such as cultural exhibitions and international exchanges, with their participation and performance being part of the evaluation. By improving the evaluation system, students can be incentivized to pay more attention to learning and disseminating Chinese culture, thereby enhancing their cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills.

3.5 Strengthening Interdisciplinary Integration

Integrating English teaching with Chinese literature, history, philosophy, and other disciplines can create interdisciplinary teaching models, promoting students' comprehensive understanding of Chinese culture. Through interdisciplinary integration, students can understand Chinese culture from different disciplinary perspectives, forming a more comprehensive and in-depth cultural understanding. Furthermore, interdisciplinary integration can stimulate students' interest in learning, improve learning efficiency, and provide students with a richer and more colorful learning experience.

4. Limitations Analysis

While the aforementioned improvement measures are expected to enhance the dissemination of Chinese culture in Chinese university English education, there are still some limitations and challenges in the implementation process, mainly manifested in the following aspects:

4.1 Resource and Facility Constraints

In some universities, especially in regions with relatively scarce resources, there may be a lack of adequate facilities and funding to support the development of Chinese cultural teaching resources and innovative teaching methods. For instance, launching new courses, updating textbooks, and introducing multimedia teaching equipment all require a certain economic investment. Furthermore, the development and maintenance of high-quality Chinese cultural teaching resources also require sustained investment and the support of professional teams.

4.2 Differences in Teacher Ability and Willingness

Teachers are crucial factors in implementing improvement measures, but there may be differences in their abilities and willingness. On one hand, not all English teachers possess sufficient knowledge of Chinese culture and teaching skills; they may need additional training and learning to be competent in cultural teaching. On the other hand, some teachers may lack enthusiasm for changing traditional teaching methods and introducing new content, which could affect the effective implementation of improvement measures.

4.3 Student Acceptance and Learning Motivation

Students are the direct beneficiaries of the dissemination of Chinese culture, but their acceptance and motivation for learning also pose uncertainties. Some students may lack interest in learning about Chinese culture or may consider such content irrelevant to their professional development and career goals, thereby affecting their enthusiasm for learning. Additionally, the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds and values may also influence their identification with and understanding of Chinese culture.

4.4 Implementation Difficulty of Evaluation System

Although proposing the establishment of an evaluation system focusing on cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills, practical challenges may arise. For example, determining how to quantify and assess students' cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills, as well as designing fair and effective evaluation criteria and methods, are issues that need to be addressed.

4.5 Challenges of Interdisciplinary Integration

Although interdisciplinary integration can provide comprehensive cultural education, it may encounter challenges during implementation. For instance, coordination and cooperation between different disciplines may be difficult, breaking disciplinary boundaries may require time and effort, and students and teachers may need to adapt to new teaching methods and learning styles.

Overall, although the proposed improvement measures have certain feasibility and potential, overcoming a series of limitations and challenges is still necessary in the practical implementation process to ensure the effective dissemination of Chinese culture in university English education. This requires joint efforts from universities, teachers, and students, as well as support from relevant policies and resources.

5. Conclusion

In summary, in the era of globalization, the dissemination of Chinese culture is of great significance for enhancing the country's cultural soft power and international influence. As an important cultural dissemination channel, Chinese university English education needs continuous improvement and innovation to more effectively disseminate Chinese culture. Measures such as enriching cultural content, innovating teaching methods, strengthening teacher training, improving evaluation systems, and enhancing interdisciplinary integration can increase students' understanding and dissemination capabilities of Chinese culture, promoting its dissemination and influence globally. At the same time, we also need to be aware of the limitations and challenges in the implementation process and take corresponding measures to overcome them, in order to achieve the long-term development of Chinese cultural dissemination and deepen international exchanges.

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